

Appl. No. : **10/800391**
Filed : **March 12, 2004**

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4, 6, 8, and 9 have been amended, Claim 14 has been canceled. Accordingly, Claims 1-13 are now pending and presented for further examination.

Claims 6, and 9 were objected to because of informalities and have been amended with corrections of the informalities.

Claims 4, 5, 8, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, as being indefinite. Claims 4, 8, and 11 have been amended to correct indefiniteness and Claims 4, 5, 8, and 11 are now compliant with 35 U.S.C. 112.

Claims 1-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 6,688,803 (Van Giezen) and US 4,321,068 (Cottrell).

The examiner states that Van Giezen "fails to specifically teach the portions of the first element defining the peripheries of both of the receiving openings protruding inwards into the tube to define two collars surrounding the second element," but that Cottrell discloses such an element.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited art provides no motivation to combine the aspects of each to form the invention of Applicants Claim 1, as amended. Applicants Claim 1, as amended, includes an aspect that the elements are connected with a bond or a weld. However, the collars of Cottrell are meant to "obviate or mitigate" the difficulties associated with welding. (See Column 1 Lines 21-26). One of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to use a technique designed to eliminate welding in order to strengthen a joint that is already bonded or welded. It is therefore not obvious to combine the two references as proposed by the Examiner.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that no motivation exists to combine the collars of Cottrell with the system of Van Giezen. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Applicants Claim 1 is patentable over Van Giezen in view of Cottrell and is in condition for allowance. Applicant further submits that as Claims 2-13 each depend from Claim 1, Claims 2-13 are also in condition for allowance.

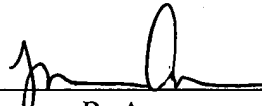
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Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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